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# General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-fourth session

75th plenary meeting
Thursday, 9 December 1999, 10 a.m.
New York

*President*: Mr. Gurirab ..... (Namibia)

*In the absence of the President, Mr. Stanislaus (Grenada), Vice-President, took the chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.*

**Agenda item 3**

**Credentials of representatives to the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly**

**Second report of the Credentials Committee (A/54/475/Add.1)**

**The Acting President**: The draft resolution recommended by the Credentials Committee in paragraph 10 of its second report reads as follows:

"*The General Assembly*,

*Having considered* the second report of the Credentials Committee and the recommendation contained therein,

*Approves* the second report of the Credentials Committee."

We shall now take action on the recommendation of the Credentials Committee set forth in paragraph 10 of the report.

The Credentials Committee adopted this draft resolution without a vote.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

*The draft resolution was adopted* (resolution 54/6 B).

**The Acting President**: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 3.

**Agenda item 54**

**Declaration of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity on the aerial and naval military attack against the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya by the present United States Administration in April 1986**

**The Acting President**: It is my understanding that, after the necessary consultations, consideration of this item may be deferred to the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of the item and to include it in the provisional agenda of the fifty-fifth session?

*It was so decided.*

**The Acting President**: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 54.

00-26100 (E)

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**Agenda item 55**

**Armed Israeli aggression against the Iraqi nuclear installations and its grave consequences for the established international system concerning the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and international peace and security**

**The Acting President**: It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the provisional agenda of the fifty-fifth session?

*It was so decided.*

**The Acting President**: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 55.

**Agenda item 56**

**Consequences of the Iraqi occupation of and aggression against Kuwait**

**The Acting President**: It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the provisional agenda of the fifty-fifth session?

*It was so decided.*

**The Acting President**: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 56.

**Agenda item 57**

**Implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations**

**The Acting President**: It is my understanding that there is no request to consider this item at the present session.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-fifth session and to include it in the provisional agenda of the fifty-fifth session?

*It was so decided.*

**The Acting President**: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 57.

**Agenda item 58**

**Launching of global negotiations on international economic cooperation for development**

**The Acting President**: May I take it that it is the Assembly's wish to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the provisional agenda of the fifty-fifth session?

*It was so decided.*

**The Acting President**: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 58.

**Agenda item 28**

**Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/54/168)**

**Draft resolution (A/54/L.55)**

**The Acting President**: I call on the representative of Azerbaijan to introduce draft resolution A/54/L.55.

**Mr. Kouliev** (Azerbaijan) (*spoke in Russian*): First of all, allow me to express my gratitude to the Secretary-General for his report contained in document A/54/168, prepared in response to paragraph 13 of General Assembly resolution 53/15, dated 29 October 1998. This report gives an overview of the state of cooperation between the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and various institutions of the United Nations system for the period 1998-1999.

The Republic of Azerbaijan attaches great importance to the development of regional cooperation within the framework of the ECO. Since its enlargement in 1992, following the accession of seven new member States, the ECO has become stronger and more dynamic,

and it has enhanced its image and prestige in the international arena.

Being by its goals and tasks a purely economic organization, the ECO is directing its efforts towards the development of cooperation of its member countries in priority economic areas, such as transport, trade, energy and telecommunications. A great deal of work is being carried out within the organization in the preparation and conclusion of further international agreements in this field, the purpose of which is to harmonize the respective national legislation of the member States.

World experience has shown that the effective development of cooperation among the countries in the field of transport has a positive influence on the overall integration processes in the region. In this respect, the ECO region, with its internal potential, rich natural and labour resources and geopolitical location, linking Europe and Asia, possesses real potential and provides incentives for the dynamic development of the transport sector, with a view to upgrading it to a level corresponding to international requirements. In this respect, I would like to mention the signing of a transit transport framework agreement by the ECO member States in May 1998. The entry into force of this Agreement will give further impetus to the development of intraregional trade and will open up additional opportunities for the creation of a favourable environment in the ECO region for the development of cooperation in industry, tourism and other economic fields.

I would also like to note that some of the ECO member States, which for centuries have been located at trade crossroads, are today parties to another major project for the restoration of the Great Silk Route. The relevant multilateral agreement was signed during the high-level international conference held in September 1997 in Baku. The implementation of this agreement will create a reliable basis for the development of the natural resources of the countries lying along the Europe-Caucasus-Asia transport corridor; it will also lead to more effective utilization of their economic potential and the expansion of trade and economic cooperation and will facilitate their further integration into the world economy.

The abundance of energy resources, including hydrocarbons, in the ECO region, presupposes the development of active cooperation in the fields of prospecting, production and transport. Such cooperation is already going on within the framework of two ECO expert working groups that are focusing their work on feasibility studies on electrical power and the construction of oil and gas pipelines in the region. Cooperation within the organization is being complemented by the active bilateral cooperation of the member States concerned.

I regret to note that the ECO region is vulnerable to the illegal production and trafficking of drugs, as well as to money laundering. This damages the image of the entire region. The cooperation of member States in the fight against this evil is on the agenda today. In this regard, I would like to stress the importance of a project on the establishment of a drug control coordination unit in the ECO secretariat, which is being carried out with the assistance and support of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP). The relevant agreement was signed between the ECO and UNDCP in October 1998. The creation of this unit will enhance coordination and cooperation among the ECO member States in the prevention of illicit drug trafficking in the region and will make it possible to compile necessary information and to make it available to the respective competent authorities of the ECO member countries concerned, thus enhancing their mutual awareness.

The ECO is actively developing cooperation among its member States in other areas as well, particularly in the humanitarian and cultural fields. In this respect, the establishment of the ECO Cultural Institute is a major achievement. The ECO Educational Institute and the ECO Science Foundation are also in the process of being set up.

Today, with the cooperation of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), a project entitled "Capacity-building of the ECO secretariat", envisaging the provision of consultancy services, technical assistance, including the training of personnel, and access to information technologies and the technical equipment of the ECO secretariat, is currently under way. The successful implementation of this project will substantially broaden and strengthen the potential of the ECO secretariat and will contribute to the ongoing efforts relating to the sustainable development of the human resources of the member countries.

The ECO is dynamically developing its relations with other international organizations. Thus, relations between the ECO and the World Trade Organization (WTO) have developed further since the ECO obtained observer status in the WTO in March 1999. Furthermore, the ECO delegation attended, in the capacity of observer, the WTO Ministerial Meeting held in Seattle last week.

Relations between the ECO and the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) are becoming stronger. Meetings of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the member States of the two organizations during the annual sessions of the General Assembly have already become traditional. The last such meeting was held this year on September 29 in New York. An extensive exchange of opinions on the development of interregional and intraregional relations, the stabilization and strengthening of domestic markets, exchange of information and other issues of mutual interest took place. This was done in the interest of opening up and fully utilizing the vast potential of both regions for the benefit of their peoples.

A few weeks ago, the ECO and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) signed a memorandum on cooperation. Delegations of the ECO participated in various meetings of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), and held meetings at the headquarters of the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP) to discuss the possibilities for the establishment of fruitful mutual cooperation.

An additional impetus to the further development of the Organization in all areas of cooperation was provided by the meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the member States of the ECO that was held in Baku in May 1998. The Baku communiqué adopted at that meeting includes concrete guidelines and priorities for future joint activities of the member countries and will serve as a good basis for the organization as it enters the next millennium.

In conclusion, I would like to express my confidence that through joint efforts, and in close and fruitful cooperation with the institutions of the United Nations, the ECO member States will be able to raise mutual cooperation to a level corresponding to their potential, to their requirements for development and to the aspirations of their peoples. That would facilitate the smooth integration of our countries into the world economic system.

Allow me now, on behalf of the 10 States members of Economic Cooperation Organization, to present draft resolution A/54/L.55, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization". Reflecting the ECO's adherence to the development of regional cooperation and summarizing the results achieved in the field of cooperation between the ECO and the United Nations system as a whole, the draft also describes prospects for enhancing this cooperation. On behalf of all the sponsors of the draft resolution, I call upon the General Assembly to adopt it by consensus.

**Mr. Nejad Hosseinian** (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, allow me to thank the Secretary-General for his report on cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization, and also to extend my sincere appreciation to Mr. Onder Ozar, Secretary-General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), and his colleagues for their endeavours to strengthen the secretariat of the ECO and to expand constructive cooperation, particularly in new areas, with regional, multilateral and international bodies and organizations and, more importantly, with the United Nations system.

The process of globalization, whose various aspects include the increased mobility of factors of production, goods and services across borders, the emergence of a global market and the flourishing of new and innovative technologies, particularly information technologies, seems to be an undeniable fact of our collective life. It is a process which makes itself felt in different arenas of the national life of all societies. This process traverses national boundaries in economy, technology and culture and is fragmenting production processes, the labour market, political entities and societies.

Powerful transnational forces are reshaping the key features of the world market and are deepening the mutual interdependence of societies. In such a global environment, where the real world is perceived as increasingly borderless, countries should establish the necessary institutional frameworks to benefit from the opportunities of this process while avoiding the serious associated risks, including marginalization. No country can face the resulting challenges of this process without the necessary preparations for integration in the world economy.

The creation of regional economic groupings is an approach by developing countries to integrate themselves smoothly into the world economy. To be effective at the international level, policy response to globalization should be both comprehensive and coherent. Establishing and strengthening regional arrangements in the area of trade and finance through various means, including by lowering tariffs and other trade barriers and eliminating impediments to capital flow in the regional grouping arrangements, will assist developing countries to enhance their capacities for integration in the world economy and

for addressing existing and future challenges resulting from globalization.

The geographical position of the ECO region, and its economic potential, particularly oil and gas reserves and the rich mineral resources in the area, provide all the ingredients for a sound industrial base and strong economic relations with other neighbouring countries and regional economic groupings. There is also considerable agricultural potential in the vast lands accommodating both livestock and grain production. However, political, economic, social and environmental challenges in the region are also enormous.

All new members of the ECO are at the stage of transition from central planning to market-oriented economies. Since these States are also landlocked, strengthening the transit infrastructure at the regional level is urgently needed for expanding trade, increasing investment opportunities and their integration into the world economy. The free flow of oil and gas from the area to the world market can play a significant role in the overall development of the producing States in the region and could potentially reinvigorate ECO as a viable partner in the world economy. It would seem difficult to argue that the transit of oil and gas from this region to the world market on the basis of any consideration other than economic feasibility and environmental reasons would serve the interest of the region or would confirm the commitment to a free market economy.

Protection of the environment, in particular in the Caspian Sea, the Aral Sea and some other regions in Central Asia, is among the major challenges facing littoral States and concerned countries of the organization. The ECO region also continues to be one of the most vulnerable regions for the illicit cultivation, production, trafficking and consumption of narcotic drugs. Furthermore, the region is one of the geographical areas most prone to natural disasters, particularly earthquakes, which have already inflicted tremendous human casualties and a devastating impact on the socio-economic infrastructure of countries of the region.

The major goals and objectives of ECO are the establishment of common institutions for the smooth movement of goods and capital among its Member States through, *inter alia*, the removal of trade barriers within the ECO region, the expansion of intraregional and interregional trade and ensuring the gradual integration of the economies of the ECO member States into the world economy and their participation in the globalization process.

The ECO secretariat has been focusing its work on finding the necessary means at the regional and international levels, particularly through technical assistance from United Nations bodies, funds and programmes, to facilitate ECO members' participation in the international economy, and also on the expansion of regional cooperation and coordination to address common socio-economic challenges and problems at the regional level.

The ECO has been expanding its relations with other regional economic groupings with the objective of benefiting from their experiences and expanding intraregional trade and investment. Establishing and strengthening close contacts with other regional organizations; carrying out exchanges of senior officials and experts in various sectors; participating in technical meetings and workshops; holding joint topical seminars and workshops with other organizations; exchanging experiences and information on policy-making for deregulation and harmonization of regulatory frameworks for trade and investment; encouraging and facilitating contacts between private sectors and chambers of commerce; and convening joint ministerial meetings with other regional organizations are important steps being taken by the ECO to strengthen cooperation with other regional organizations.

We welcome the growing joint programmes between the ECO and the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme. At the same time, we believe there still exist ample opportunities for expansion of such cooperation, and we are confident that we can jointly explore and operationalize the new areas of cooperation.

I cannot conclude without referring to the menace of the illicit cultivation, consumption and trafficking of narcotics in the region. We believe that strong support from the international community in all areas, as well as intensive regional cooperation to combat this hazardous problem and to constrain the transit of narcotic drugs, is vital not only for the socio-economic well-being of the region but also for that of other countries, particularly in Europe. The establishment of a drug control coordination unit in the ECO is a positive step towards the realization of this objective.

In this context, cooperation among the ECO and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and other intergovernmental, international and regional organizations is imperative, especially through supporting the efforts of the transit countries to halt the flow and trafficking of illicit drugs to consuming countries. Combating drug trafficking will be successful if resources are made available to operationalize various programmes jointly developed by ECO and United Nations bodies. Hence, the financial burden associated with the programmes to stop the cultivation, production, trafficking and consumption must be shared by all concerned.

Let me close by expressing in advance our gratitude for the adoption of the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization. It is hoped that it will be adopted by a unanimous decision of the Assembly.

**The Acting President**: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/54/L.55.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/54/L.55?

*Draft resolution A/54/L.55 was adopted* (resolution 54/100).

**The Acting President**: I call on the representative of the United States of America, who wishes to speak in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted.

May I remind delegations that explanations of vote or position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

**Mr. Gallagher** (United States of America): The United States interprets paragraph 8 of the resolution just adopted as encouraging contacts between the international financial institutions and the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) secretariat, an action that we welcome. However, in many cases specific international financial institutions have not yet decided on what constitutes appropriate relations with individual ECO member States. We believe the General Assembly should not interject itself into issues as contentious as these.

**The Acting President**: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of position.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 28?

*It was so decided.*

**Agenda item 46** *(continued)*

**Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/54/133)**

**Letter from the President of the Economic and Social Council addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/54/513)**

**Mr. Estreme** (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour for Argentina, and for me personally, to intervene in this debate.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report of 14 June 1999 on development in Africa.

As the Secretary-General has stated, despite the efforts being carried out by most African countries to strengthen their democratic institutions, promote human rights and reform their economies, the situation in recent years has not been the best. Growth in the economies of most countries of the region has dropped, as the servicing of their foreign debt continues to deprive the countries of the continent of resources that could be used for development. To this we must add the persistence of violence in many parts of Africa, along with the terrible humanitarian implications.

In our statement yesterday on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU), we said that in order to achieve lasting peace in Africa the minimum conditions for development had to be created in order to overcome the causes of conflicts and to deal with their humanitarian consequences. We pointed out that this task requires the support of the international community, and in particular that of the various agencies of the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions.

In order to coordinate these tasks it is of the utmost importance to carry out a follow-up of the implementation of the recommendations set out by the Secretary-General in his report of 14 April 1998 (A/52/871) on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. Last September, the Security Council examined the

elements associated with peace and security set out in that report. As the Secretary-General summarized in the current report on development in Africa, it seems essential to us today to examine the initiatives undertaken by the United Nations in the areas of strengthening good governance, social development, eliminating discrimination against women, increasing trade and promoting capital investment and regional integration.

Without going into details, we would like to say that the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, which was adopted by the Assembly in December 1991, outlines priority areas for these various initiatives. Among them we would like to highlight the adoption of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution by the Organization of African Unity, and the adoption in 1995 of the Cairo Agenda for the economic and social development of Africa.

Within its ability, Argentina has worked with Africa in some of these areas — whether in humanitarian activities, such as mine clearance and sending food aid, or by carrying out technical cooperation programmes in such diverse areas as agricultural development, human resources training and promoting good governance. This is all being carried out through a special programme known as the Argentine Fund for Horizontal Cooperation (FOAR).

Allow me to conclude by indicating once again that it is only by eliminating the underlying causes of conflict in Africa, which are essentially poverty and marginalization, that we will be able to lay the foundations for a lasting peace. The Africans themselves must take the lead with initiative and creativity. Fortunately, these qualities have been in evidence in the recent efforts undertaken by regional and subregional organizations on the continent.

The international community must also continue to provide assistance in this process. We believe that in this respect key tools will be provided by the guidelines set out by the Secretary-General in the documents mentioned earlier, which will require sustained and careful follow-up.

**Mr. Suh** (Republic of Korea): Allow me first to express my delegation's appreciation for the Secretary-General's report on the development of Africa and for his progress report on the implementation of the recommendations contained in his April 1998 report on Africa. My delegation notes the substantial progress made by the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council, as well as by the entire United Nations system, in implementing the Secretary-General's recommendations. We fully share the Secretary-General's view that Africa's challenges require a comprehensive and integrated approach. The States Members of the United Nations should not only continue to make individual efforts, but also pool new resources and determination into an integrated initiative.

During the past several years, there has been a great deal of success in eradicating poverty and famine, advancing education, controlling disease and meeting emergency and humanitarian needs in many parts of Africa. Yet the international community can and must do more. For one, the successful implementation of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa will require efficient coordination and clear mandates for the relevant agencies. Moreover, we must enhance our efforts to harmonize various international and bilateral initiatives on African development to achieve maximum efficiency and effectiveness.

On the political front, many African countries have met with notable success in recent years. In the key States of South Africa, Nigeria and the Central African Republic, democratically elected leaders have taken office. I am certain that these developments will generate positive momentum towards the advancement of democracy across the continent. These new leaders now join many other Africans in advocating democracy and good governance as the foundations of peace and development on the continent. We appreciate in particular President Bouteflika of Algeria, the current Chairman of the Organization for African Unity (OAU), and Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim, Secretary-General of the OAU, for their able leadership and indispensable roles in promoting peace and development in Africa.

Important progress has also been made in some of the most intractable conflict situations on the continent. In both Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the international community, together with the parties themselves, has worked diligently to achieve peace agreements. We must continue to build on these hard-won achievements until we secure lasting peace and stability for the entire region.

Allow me now to touch upon several points to which my delegation attaches great importance.

First, we share the conviction of the Secretary-General that democracy and good governance, along with sustainable development, are fundamental to long-term peace and prosperity in Africa. Our own experience with

the development process illustrates that good governance, underpinned by democracy and respect for human rights and buttressed by free-market principles, best ensures peace, stability and prosperity in the long run. We commend the numerous strides already made in this regard in Africa, as described in the Secretary-General's report. The international community should continue to work in intimate collaboration with African countries with a view to further enhancing their capacity for democracy, good governance and sustainable development.

Secondly, it should be noted that technical assistance and exchange can play an enormously beneficial role in increasing potential for development on the African continent. In this context, I should like to stress the need to elaborate on the substantial implementation of the results of the Geneva High-level Meeting on the least developed countries in 1997. For our part, my Government, in cooperation with the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries, hosted a Forum on Asia-Africa Cooperation in Export Promotion from 14 to 16 December 1998 in Seoul. In coordination with the United Nations Development Programme, my Government will also be hosting from 31 January to 3 February 2000 in Seoul a High-level Forum on South-South Cooperation in Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the Twenty-first Century. We believe that further South-South cooperation of this sort holds enormous potential.

Furthermore, the Government of the Republic of Korea allocated $2.3 million in the form of projects, procurements, development surveys, invitation of trainees and dispatch of experts to 23 African countries last year alone. As it is our view that information technology holds rich promise for developing countries, we have also supported the establishment of a United Nations Technology Centre for Africa and Internet access for the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) through the Korea-ECA Cooperation Fund. This fund, established in 1995, had already contributed over $1 million to Africa by 1998.

Thirdly, our delegation would like to reiterate the importance of stability and peace. In this context, we wish to underline that efforts to prevent conflicts are urgently needed in Africa. Given the number of potentially combustible situations, there is an urgent need to build up the capacity to prevent conflicts through early warning and pre-emptive action. Post-conflict peace-building support structures in Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and other countries, as aptly described in the Secretary-General's progress report, can certainly serve as models for conflict prevention i these and other areas of potential conflict.

We believe that the Secretary-General's Trust Fun for Preventive Action is a useful mechanism to enhanc the capabilities of the United Nations in conflic prevention in Africa and elsewhere. My Government ha contributed annually to the Trust Fund since its inceptio in 1997, and we call upon other Member States who hav not done so to make their financial resources available t the Secretary-General for this purpose.

Finally, my delegation believes that rapid respons is crucial for containing deadly conflict and its tragi humanitarian consequences. Certainly, African countrie themselves must take additional steps to enhance the own peacekeeping capacity. Yet the internationa community can help as well. Along these lines, w support the measures undertaken by the United Natio to upgrade Africa's peacekeeping capacity, including sta exchange programmes between the United Nations an the OAU, United Nations-led training assistance fo African peacekeepers and coordination with the Economi Community of West African States, among other effort We share the concern of the Secretary-General about ho best to provide logistical support to African troop involved in peacekeeping operations, particularly in th early stages of conflict. In our view, it is necessary t explore the possibility of establishing standb arrangements for such support.

My Government has always accorded high priorit to the maintenance of amicable ties, cooperatio solidarity and partnership with African countries. Th Republic of Korea has participated in, among othe activities, electoral assistance missions in South Afric and Mozambique, and we have sent peacekeepers t Somalia, Angola and Western Sahara. We hav consistently supported cooperative development initiativ in Africa, particularly in capacity-building. My delegatio takes this opportunity to renew my Government commitment to the efforts of the United Nations, th OAU and African countries in support of peace an prosperity on the African continent.

**Mr. Kolby** (Norway): Norway welcomes th opportunity to discuss the complementary issues promoting durable peace and fostering sustainab development in Africa. We would like to thank th Secretary-General for his report, which provides a goo basis for our discussion.

Descriptions of the situation in Africa tend to be sombre, often painting a gloomy picture of a conflict-ridden continent with significant social and economic problems. However, such a picture is far from complete and tends to obscure the progress being made in many parts of Africa. Positive developments include the demise of apartheid in South Africa, the restoration of a peaceful Mali, the recent democratization of the Government of Nigeria and the long and difficult path from civil war to elections in Mozambique.

However, the challenges facing the African countries are significant. The World Bank's latest *Global Economic Prospects* report presents a grim picture of limited economic growth and poverty reduction in sub-Saharan Africa. Today, that region has the largest share of people living on less than $1 a day. Present growth rates are too low to reduce the number of poor people, in large part due to conflict, lack of international support and recent climatic conditions.

It is imperative that African countries and the international community counter this trend through building partnerships aimed at reversing the negative trend in development assistance, increasing foreign direct investment and making more effective use of resources. Norway will contribute to this end by maintaining the level of its assistance at 0.89 per cent of gross national product in 2000. During the first years of the new millennium the intention is to gradually increase this level to 1 per cent. At the same time, Norway is aiming at increasing the level of its bilateral assistance to Africa to 50 per cent of the total aid budget. Norway also supports the international initiatives to make development assistance more effective in poverty reduction and to help focus national development strategies on this crucial challenge.

The heavy debt burden of many African countries also needs to be alleviated. We encourage all creditor countries to seek ways to give the heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) a new start at the turn of the millennium, urging countries that lag behind to contribute their share of HIPC financing. Norway is prepared to contribute its share, and has already declared that it is ready to cancel 100 per cent of commercial claims on HIPC countries. Regarding debt relief, Norway will give priority to 22 countries, of which 18 are in Africa.

Turning to security issues, it is our view that the United Nations is the Organization best suited to lead and coordinate complex multifunctional peace operations. The Organization is unique in its ability to make use of a combination of various security policy instruments. The United Nations will, however, often need to draw on strong regional or subregional organizations when large military forces with peace-building capabilities are called for. A recent example of this is the cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Community of West African States in the peace operation in Sierra Leone. Regional organizations can more readily mobilize the standing forces of their members and merge them into a single force. It is therefore important to strengthen the regional capacity for participation in peace operations.

Furthermore, the United Nations should work closely with the relevant regional organizations in order to establish common principles for training personnel and units intended for participation in peace operations. It is also important to establish common organizational structures for interaction between the United Nations and the relevant regional organizations and to improve effective multifunctional planning and coordination. In order to realize these important aims, those member countries with greater financial resources and extensive experience of peace operations should provide funding and personnel to establish a self-sustaining peacekeeping capacity within the regional security organizations.

Norway has been very active in this regard, particularly in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region through a programme called Training for Peace in Southern Africa. The scope of the programme is to organize courses for civilian police and military officers selected for possible service in peacekeeping operations. The programme will initially run for 5 years, and Norway has sponsored it with approximately $2.5 million. Since its start in 1995, Training for Peace has conducted national courses and regional seminars on peacekeeping operations in 11 SADC countries, with the participation of more than 600 persons.

The conflicts of the last decade have shown us that in order to create peace, it is not enough merely to stop the actual fighting. If a ceasefire is to become a sustainable peace, it is important that the international community help rebuild viable administrative structures and civil society. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration are important elements in this regard. Norway financially supports such initiatives as the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme in Sierra Leone.

The presence of large numbers of small arms and light weapons is a major destabilizing factor in a post-conflict environment. These weapons undermine the security of war-affected populations and threaten the safety of international peacekeepers and humanitarian personnel. Norway has played an active role in a pilot project in this area with its support for efforts to achieve a moratorium on small arms in West Africa.

Anti-personnel mines constitute another serious obstacle to post-conflict reconstruction. We have urged all countries Members of the United Nations to sign and ratify the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. We also emphasize the need for adequate resources for mine-clearance activities. Norway has already stated its intention to contribute $120 million over five years for this purpose.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that Africa is not a poor continent. The opposite is true. Africa has over the centuries been rich in human and natural resources. The efforts of African countries to meet the twin challenges of building peace and of achieving development deserve the active support of the international community, in a partnership where the United Nations should continue to be in the forefront. Norway will continue to do its utmost to contribute to reaching these goals.

**Mr. Satoh** (Japan): Poverty and conflicts are the two major problems that have been hampering the development of many countries in Africa. They also pose serious threats to human security — that is to security in the life and dignity of communities and their members — in many parts of the continent. And we all know that women and children are always the first to suffer. It therefore goes without saying that sustainable development and conflict prevention are essential for bettering the lives of the peoples of Africa.

Yet the problems involved are difficult to solve. Both poverty and conflict are deeply rooted in the history of the countries and communities concerned. And, as has been often pointed out, the two issues are so interrelated that they create a vicious circle in which the recurrence of conflict makes poverty worse and in which poverty makes post-conflict rehabilitation and reconciliation more difficult.

The task of preventing the occurrence and recurrence of conflicts is vast, ranging from diplomatic efforts to make peace, military efforts to keep peace and political efforts for reconciliation to such activities as the protection and repatriation of refugees and displaced persons, mine-clearance, the imposition of controls on the illicit trade i small arms, the reintegration into society of demobilize ex-soldiers and the rehabilitation and reconstruction societies.

The task of making progress in economic and socia development in the African countries concerned is equall vast and complex, although I do not intend to repeat th list of problems that are already well known.

As has been acknowledged, responsibility for bot peacemaking and economic development rests first an foremost with the countries concerned, albeit in differen contexts. But it is equally evident that these efforts shoul be supported by strong international cooperation at th regional and the global levels. Obviously, the ways i which outside countries and international organization provide such cooperation will vary from case to case. I particular, the way in which we should assist in conflic prevention differs from the way in which we should hel with economic development. For example, the Unite Nations, and the Security Council in particular, must pla a leading role in conflict prevention, while th commitment of donor countries is critically important fo economic development.

It is not my intention today to dwell on what m country has been doing to help African countries. I jus want, however, to take this opportunity to speak briefl about the most recent case of follow-up to the Secon Tokyo International Conference on African Development the Asia-Africa Business Forum, held at Kuala Lumpu in October in collaboration with the United Nation Development Programme and the Government Malaysia. The purpose of the Forum was to promot trade and investment between African and Asian busines enterprises. It turned out that 149 private Africa companies and 129 Asian companies participated in th event, and that the negotiations among them have alread produced $2.45 million worth of contracts. Mor contracts are expected in the coming months, of course

The United Nations has a core catalytic role to pla in the process of ensuring peace and prosperity for th peoples of Africa. It is the responsibility of all Membe States to make sure that the United Nations plays tha role properly and efficiently. Japan for its part is firml committed to working together with other Member State towards the common goal of realizing durable peace an sustainable development in Africa.

**Mr. Qin Huasun** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Since the submission of his 1998 report (A/52/871) entitled "The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa", the Secretary-General has this year submitted a progress report on follow-up (A/54/133), which contains information on work and achievements in the implementation by relevant bodies of the United Nations system of recommendations in a number of fields. The report is rich in content and contains thorough analysis. It is very helpful to our discussion, and I wish to commend the Secretary-General and the relevant United Nations bodies for the efforts they have made in resolving African issues.

Over the past year or so, the African continent has on the whole maintained stability and has enjoyed some economic growth. Positive momentum has emerged for the political settlement of issues such as Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The successful convening of the thirty-fifth ordinary session and the fourth extraordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) reflects the shared aspirations of African countries for unity and for rebirth.

At the same time, however, we cannot fail to see that the African continent is still the least developed region of the world in economic terms, and that there are still more conflicts in Africa than in any other continent. As humanity enters the new millennium, Africa is in danger of being further marginalized. African issues are far from being resolved, and the international community still has a long way to go in that regard.

In the Security Council's open debate on the situation in Africa held this past September, I made the following five points on how the international community should proceed to resolve African issues. It should pay adequate attention to Africa from a strategic perspective; create a favourable external environment for Africa so that it can enjoy stability and sustained development; respect the choices made by African countries themselves; give vigorous support to efforts by regional organizations in Africa; and take concrete and effective measures to help African countries in their development endeavours. Today, I would like to emphasize two further points.

First, the key to the resolution of African issues is economic development. A number of initiatives on African development have already been proposed both within and outside the United Nations system. What is urgently needed now is to coordinate and prioritize these initiatives so as to avoid repetition and improve efficiency. We believe that the priorities should include stopping the continuous drop in official development assistance; reducing the debt burden of African countries to a sustainable level and helping them effectively raise funds; helping African countries in human resources development through education, technology transfer and other means and helping them reform their economic structure; and supporting African countries in their capacity-building in trade and market access and helping ensure that they get their fair share while effectively integrating themselves into the globalization process.

Secondly, United Nations bodies should strengthen their coordination and cooperation on African issues. Even though the Security Council has biennial Foreign Ministers' meetings on Africa in which relevant issues are regularly discussed, and even though the Economic and Social Council has also made African issues a recurrent item on its agenda, still, given the wide range of issues concerned and the complex internal and external factors involved, African issues can not be resolved by one or two institutions alone. We encourage more parties to get involved. Meanwhile, it is our hope that besides holding regular discussions on this issue, the General Assembly will further develop its coordinating role and take a more important part in mobilizing the international community and other relevant international organizations to increase their involvement in African issues.

China has always had close and friendly relations and cooperation with African countries. We have always supported the legitimate demands and reasonable requests of African countries, as well as their efforts to maintain political stability and promote economic growth. We respect the choice of political system and path of development made by African countries themselves in the light of their own national conditions. We support their economic development efforts. We are committed to strengthening Chinese-African economic cooperation and trade and have offered various kinds of assistance to African countries without attaching any conditions.

In order to enhance the cooperation between China and Africa, China will host a China-Africa Cooperation Forum, Ministerial Meeting 2000 next fall in Beijing. African Foreign Ministers and Ministers in charge of foreign trade and economic matters will be invited to participate in the meeting to exchange views on how to establish a new international economic and political order favourable to developing countries and how to strengthen Chinese-African economic cooperation and trade. We are

confident that with the concerted efforts and close cooperation of the two sides, the forum will produce positive results and will inject new vitality into the friendship between China and Africa.

**Mr. Santos** (Mozambique): We take great pride in the manner in which the President of the General Assembly is conducting the affairs of this body. We shall continue to render him our unconditional support.

In 23 days we will witness the end of the twentieth century and the dawn of a new millennium. It is therefore fitting that we gather here today to debate one of the greatest challenges of the United Nations and the international community as we cross into the new era. Our common success or failure will be judged by the degree to which we succeed or fail in addressing conflicts and the challenge of generating sustainable development in Africa.

The Secretary-General, a distinguished son of Africa, did a great service to the continent and the international community by identifying clearly the main causes of conflict in Africa and advancing recommendations for their durable settlement, as well as for promoting sustainable development. The report of the Secretary-General is an important instrument that highlights the critical situation of Africa and points the direction in which the international community should be moving.

In assessing the implementation of the report, we are happy to note that it has attracted wide interest and attention, and it has been analysed and debated in various forums both within and outside the United Nations. The use of the report by research and academic institutions, non-governmental organizations and civil society at large when discussing issues related to peace, security and development in Africa is very encouraging. The solutions to Africa's problems require the participation and involvement of all stakeholders.

It has been stated on several occasions that the responsibility for resolving conflicts and promoting sustainable development in Africa lies with the Africans themselves. The African leaders have reaffirmed their commitment in recent Organization of African Unity (OAU) summits, particularly those in Algiers and Sirte, as well as in the global conferences. Africans have determined their goals and priorities and have established mechanisms for implementation. These are, to a large extent, reflected in the Secretary-General's report. However, it is evident that the Africans need the unconditional and invaluable support of the international community if they are to succeed in their efforts.

Many initiatives have been advanced aimed at addressing the various aspects of the African situation, both within the United Nations and outside. Most of those initiatives are yet to be implemented, and many remain simply on paper. The crucial factor in most of those initiatives has been the lack of financial and other resources to translate them into concrete action. Another equally important factor has been the lack of coherence, coordination and harmonization, resulting in overlapping and investment in less fundamental fields.

We therefore strongly support the consideration by the Economic and Social Council of the theme "Development of Africa: implementation and coordinated follow-up by the United Nations system of initiatives on African development". We attach great importance also to General Assembly resolution 53/92, which invited African countries and their partners to jointly identify and rank priorities in partnership, to define respective responsibilities and to agree on realistic and measurable targets in priority areas. This should allow for a comprehensive and holistic approach to the situation.

In most cases we will find that realistic plans and programmes have been adopted by the OAU and subregional organizations and simply require adjustments and resources for their effective implementation. The world conferences and the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) have made a significant contribution in this regard.

In this context, we concur with the view that

> "the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, as well as other multilateral and regional organizations and bilateral donors, [should] collaborate with the Government of each African country, and among themselves, in order to ensure the consistency of the various coordination mechanisms, favouring synergy, containing duplication, avoiding contradictions and simplifying, as appropriate, the modalities and procedures required by the functioning of these mechanisms". (*A/54/133, para. 103*)

The constant improvement and strengthening of coordination between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations is equally crucial.

The World Summit for Social Development has established the target date of 2015 for halving poverty. The importance of a substantial and sustained pace of economic growth, which the Secretary-General highlighted in his report, has to be at the rate of 7 per cent per year if we are to achieve this target. We seriously believe that this can still be achieved.

With adequate financing for development, we should be able not only to generate economic growth but also, and most importantly, to improve the living standards of our peoples by improving primary to tertiary education, health care and infrastructure and reintegrating refugees and displaced persons, thus gradually reducing poverty throughout the continent. A number of countries in Africa have shown that this is possible.

Financing for Africa's development will have to come from all sources — that is, from a substantial increase of official development assistance, reversing the current trend; domestic savings; diversified foreign direct investment; and international financial institutions. Africa has done a lot to create and constantly improve the enabling environment for local and foreign investment as well as for the effective and efficient use of the resources flowing to the region.

One important aspect in this regard is the issue of external debt, which remains an impediment to sustainable economic growth. Initiatives as useful as the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative have not yet reversed the trend. The increase in external debt from 1997 to 1998 of $6 billion — which is more than 300 per cent of the value of exported goods and services — remains a cause for great concern. Solutions need to match the magnitude of the problem, and action has to be speedy and effective.

We are encouraged by the initiatives of individual developed countries to address the African problems. These initiatives include the Tokyo International Conference on African Development, the Swedish Partnership with Africa and the United Kingdom Initiative on Eliminating World Poverty. We also value the assistance from and cooperation with our partners in the South.

There is no doubt that unless we settle the armed conflicts in Africa, all efforts aimed at promoting sustainable development will be in constant jeopardy. This is the reason why the leaders of our continent have spared no effort in seeking solutions to the conflicts ravaging the continent. This is evident in the cases of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia and Eritrea, the Comoros and elsewhere in the region. Not only have our leaders sought to restore peace in those countries in conflict, but have also aimed at addressing the root causes of the conflicts, promoting reconciliation and tolerance and respect for human rights, as well as consolidating the government institutions, legislatures and judiciaries.

However, these efforts have not always been matched by timely and adequate support from the international community. Thus, the progress already achieved in some conflict areas has been endangered. The arguments often advanced for inaction or delays have led Africans to believe that the Security Council and the United Nations as a whole discriminate against Africa through the use of selective treatment. These perceptions are justified and do not ignore the generous support that has been extended to the continent on various occasions and in all fields.

We believe that the United Nations and the international community at large can do more and do it effectively. I come from a subregion that has witnessed the international community taking action for a common purpose. The cases of Namibia, South Africa and my own country, Mozambique, are very good examples of such action. But this is the same region that is witnessing a slow response by the international community to the opportunities to settle conflicts by peaceful means.

Nevertheless, we shall continue to work with all our partners, because we continue to trust our partnerships and our partners' desire to help us help ourselves.

We wish to register our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his progress report, contained in document S/1999/1008, on the implementation of his recommendations. We encourage him to continue with his efforts and dedication, and we pledge our support.

We welcome his decision to entrust the follow-up and monitoring of the implementation of his recommendations to the Deputy Secretary-General. This will certainly ensure greater inter-agency coordination and harmonization.

In conclusion, we would like to express our profound gratitude to the United Nations, to all the Member States, international organizations and institutions, and to non-governmental organizations for their contributions to peace and sustainable development

in Africa. We reiterate our appeal for more assistance in a spirit of cooperation, partnership and African ownership.

**Mr. Valdivieso** (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I must say that you, Sir, have a very special responsibility in leading this important debate that follows up the Secretary-General's recommendations to the General Assembly and the Security Council on ways to promote lasting peace and sustainable development in Africa.

One of the merits of the Secretary-General's report has been to provide the United Nations Member States and the various international organizations with a broad and realistic overview of the African situation. It also examines very closely the causes of existing conflicts and considers various strategies for overcoming these conflicts.

Last year, the Assembly invited the Economic and Social Council to focus on Africa during its annual coordination segment in order to improve coordination between the various existing initiatives, within and outside the United Nations, to promote development on that continent.

In my capacity as Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council, I had the honour to preside over the work of the coordination segment at the request of the Bureau. The members of the Council responded with enthusiasm to the Assembly's appeal and set down their deliberations in the agreed conclusions that are contained in the Council's report. Furthermore, the Council expressly requested that its debate be brought to the Assembly's attention. I should like to mention only five of the points of the agreed conclusions in order to contribute to our consideration of this topic.

First, the Council recognized the existence of broad agreement on the priorities for African development as defined in the Cairo Agenda for Action and the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. It also recognized the need to take note of the variety of country-specific situations and needs in the African region.

Secondly, the Council stressed the importance of various programmes and initiatives that are being undertaken by the United Nations, bilateral donors and multilateral institutions. At the same time, it believes that these initiatives require more effective coordination and harmonization of the implementation of all initiatives, better funding and stronger ownership by recipient countries.

Thirdly, in order to promote greater involvement of the African countries, national development strategies should form the basis and framework for overall coordination and national capacities should be strengthened. In this respect, the resident coordinators of the United Nations and the various external partners can make an important contribution. It will also be necessary clearly to define the roles to be played by the various stakeholders: Governments, parliaments and civil society, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

Fourthly, as to programme financing, the catalytic role of the United Nations system could be strengthened if countries were able to rely on more stable, predictable and assured resource levels, in particular core resource levels, to which donor countries should contribute on an increased and sustained basis.

Fifthly and finally, the Council urged all agents for development in Africa to make greater efforts to coordinate and harmonize programmes. To this end, coordination among the bilateral donors, the United Nations agencies implementing programmes and the countries at the regional and subregional levels is required. Thus, the Council recommended that thematic consultations among all development partners be held under the chairmanship of the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, with the involvement of the Organization of African Unity and African economic communities. In this respect, we welcome the resolution on strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity.

The Secretary-General tells us in his report on this item that, in order to bring about significant progress in African development, a more genuine supportive attitude on the part of donors and Africa's trading partners is needed. The countries of the continent will also have to rely on regional integration to promote economic discipline and facilitate the establishment of solid institutional confidence-building links at the national level between neighbouring countries.

Colombia has reached the same conclusion on the basis of the economic integration that has developed over the past 30 years between the five member States of the Andean Community and through the process of consultation and coordination among the countries of the Rio Group. Not only has a greater degree of confidence among the neighbouring countries emerged through this integration, but our country and region have also been

able to maintain a more extensive dialogue with other regions of the world.

In Africa, the persistence of certain international and domestic conflicts reminds us of the challenges faced by African societies in order to achieve a durable peace. Moreover, the levels of poverty, external indebtedness and official development assistance show how difficult it will be to achieve sustainable development. Nevertheless, my country welcomes recent positive developments in the economic, political and social situations of many African countries. These successes allow us to foresee Africa's spiritual rebirth into the world, which we all fervently embrace.

**Mr. Essonghe** (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): Since the issuance of the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, my delegation has had the opportunity to speak at the ambassadorial and ministerial levels on this issue. Last September, it expressed its opinion during the consideration of the Secretary-General's mid-term report.

Today, we welcome the consideration of this item on the General Assembly's agenda, which allows us to stress the concrete aspects of the report with respect to progress made since the ad hoc Working Group established under Security Council resolution 1170 (1998) — over which my country had the honour of presiding — completed its work.

The Working Group capped its deliberations by proposing to the Council, which subsequently adopted them, four draft resolutions and two presidential statements on support for regional and subregional initiatives in the field of conflict prevention and peacekeeping; the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps and settlements; the strengthening of African peacekeeping capacities; increased effectiveness of arms embargoes; illicit flows of small arms and light weapons; and the Security Council's capacity to control the peacekeeping operations it authorizes. All these texts contain practical measures for the implementation of the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his report of April 1998.

Despite the interest and encouraging results that the Secretary-General's report has elicited, it must be noted that little progress and few tangible achievements have been made on the ground. At the economic level, the deficiencies and handicaps of African economies must be mitigated, given the fact that virtually all African conflicts are fueled by the imbalanced distribution of the fruits of expansion, which depend on economic health. The latter, in turn, depends on an international environment that is often inhospitable and hostile to African countries.

It is clear that Africa continues to progress along the path of respect for and promotion of fundamental individual freedoms, good governance and the resolution of the many conflicts that afflict it. But these efforts require support for the development measures undertaken by the African countries. It would be especially beneficial for them for the heavy debt burden to be dealt with or even cancelled.

It would also be beneficial to increase the amount of official development assistance and to reverse the tendency of decreasing trend of capital flows to the continent. United Nations specialized agencies, such as the Economic and Social Council, should accelerate the implementation of the recommendations within their competence.

Regarding conflict prevention and peacekeeping, we are awaiting the concerted implementation of resolution 1197 of 18 September 1998, as well as of the presidential statement contained in document S/PRST/1998/28 of 16 September 1998.

Specifically, we believe that it is necessary to strengthen contributions to the trust funds established by the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity to improve preparedness for conflict prevention and peacekeeping in Africa. In this connection, we welcome the good cooperation and coordination initiated by the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity through the exchange of personnel.

The question of peacekeeping operations remains crucial, given the imbalances and delays stemming from the discriminatory treatment of conflicts between one region and another. Of course, this practice runs counter to the declarations of intent we often hear, as well as the aspiration of the United Nations to resolve conflicts.

*The President took the Chair.*

Resolutions 1196 (1998) and 1209 (1998) deal with questions related to arms embargo regimes and the destabilizing accumulation of small arms and light weapons. It is encouraging to note that the Secretariat has not only had a number of contacts with regional African organs, but has also organized meetings on the illicit

circulation of weapons, such as the seminar on Central Africa held in July 1999.

It is also appropriate to pay a tribute to DeBeers, the South African company, and to one of the members of the Security Council for their contribution to the struggle against conflicts in Africa by taking concrete measures against a rebel movement in an African country.

As has been repeatedly stressed, the Secretary-General's report calls for a global response that takes into account the link between peace and development, which has been so well highlighted in the report. The implementation of that recommendation therefore requires the mobilization of all and a firm commitment that goes beyond mere declarations of intent if we wish to see the continent enter the third millennium in peace and participate confidently in building a better world.

**Mr. Amer** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): The general debate taking place in the General Assembly today and the various debates held at various levels in the United Nations emphasize again the importance that the international community attaches to the establishment of peace and to the creation of adequate conditions for lasting sustainable development so that the people of Africa can enjoy security and the economic conditions they deserve.

I should like to take this opportunity to convey my delegation's gratitude to the Secretary-General for his progress report regarding the implementation of the recommendations set out two years ago on the causes of conflict in Africa and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in that continent.

When this question was discussed at the last session, the General Assembly adopted a resolution that included very important recommendations. Like other decisions and recommendations adopted within the United Nations system and in other forums, the resolution provided momentum and support to efforts to establish peace in Africa and to strengthen the African economies. In Libya we appreciate that and the fact that the Secretary-General has participated concretely in assisting Africa to overcome the difficulties it faces and to promote its prosperity. The Secretary-General sent representatives and working groups and prepared many reports that contained a number of proposals and recommendations.

However, it must be noted that such expressions of solidarity and support have not been translated into action in response to the recommendations and resolutions because the United Nations has not given Africa what it has given other regions of the world, especially regarding conflict prevention, peacekeeping operations and adequate assistance to refugees. The United Nations withdrew from Somalia, leaving the country drowning in a most painful and bloody struggle. Angola was similarly abandoned in bitter conflict, except for the provision of weapons to extremist elements there. Humanitarian assistance to Africa remains below the requisite level because, as is highlighted in the Secretary-General's report in document S/1999/1008, the United Nations received only half of what was requested in order to meet humanitarian assistance needs in Africa in 1999.

Of course, all this is very sad indeed. We note that, beyond the resolutions, statements and declarations of intent that we have heard, what has been done is not commensurate with what is needed for the struggle against the problems afflicting Africa, such as the growing problem of AIDS, which has led to death and hopelessness; and what has been done has not put an end to the poverty lying at the root of social conflict. In addition, Africa is unable to reach world markets and to obtain fair prices for its export commodities.

Everybody knows that words alone will not resolve the problem of external debt, which has bled African economies white and has handicapped their development. By the same token, this problem will hinder Africa's efforts to resolve its humanitarian problems and deal with the consequences of natural disasters.

Despite the problems and conflicts taking place there and despite all the declarations of international support — even though such support is either limited or absent — Africa is seriously utilizing its capabilities and opportunities to overcome its economic difficulties, to strengthen economic cooperation within the continent and to set up social and economic groups at the regional level.

African wisdom has also made it possible to convince the parties to conflicts to resolve their differences, as has happened in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where arms have been put down and dialogue and negotiations have been embarked upon. The Lusaka Agreement, the Sirte agreement and others have had similar results.

Of course, in this context, the fourth extraordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State of the

Organization of African Unity (OAU), held last September in Sirte was a starting point of great importance for expressing the will and determination of the African heads of State or Government to take up the challenge of peace in the continent and to begin working for development. This reflects Africa's determination to face up to realities and to embark upon a new era, a new future in which Africa must count on its own capabilities and its own children. First and foremost, Africa fully realizes that the global aspect of development within the continent is something its children must be responsible for.

Nevertheless, Africa expects the international community to support its efforts. It is not possible for African countries, due to the limited nature of their resources, to put an end to all of Africa's ills. We need an international agenda that would check the spread of malaria and AIDS, from which half the people of African countries suffer. Working for peace would be a virtually useless effort if one did not strengthen the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, both politically and financially. A training programme is also needed.

It is the responsibility of the United Nations to strengthen and increase its aid to Africa to industrialize its production of primary commodities and to implement development plans for its seaports and airports, as well as for linking its various regions through a modern network of roads. This would provide a new impetus to Africa's development, which requires a revision of the unfair conditions that are now applied by international financial institutions and are imposed on Governments. It also requires the conclusion of new agreements offering fair prices for Africa's primary commodities.

We also call for the removal of obstacles in the way of African products reaching world markets. International solidarity with Africa requires a new dimension for the solution of economic problems. This must be done in order to resolve definitively the problem of external debt, which stands in the way of the economic development of African countries. The United Nations system must totally cancel the debts of African countries in order to establish a fair international system that would be beneficial to future generations.

**Mr. Andjaba** (Namibia): The report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871) provides a holistic approach to the problems of peace and development. It proposes detailed recommendations to bring about peace and to create a favourable environment for sustained economic growth and sustainable development in Africa.

Furthermore, the Secretary-General's report contained in document A/54/133 constitutes a progress report on the implementation of those recommendations, as well as on coordinated follow-up by the United Nations system of initiatives on Africa. I wish to take this opportunity to express my delegation's appreciation to the Secretary-General for sparing no effort in advocating the development of Africa.

For the past two days we have been discussing Africa. Much has been said on the economic, social and environmental constraints facing Africa, not to mention the ongoing conflicts in some parts of our continent. Let me address some of those pertinent issues.

Indeed, as clearly pointed out in the report, Africa's development depends primarily on African Governments. It is for this reason that African countries continue to create the domestic conditions to bring about a favourable environment to enhance the prosperity of our people. However, there is also a clear consensus that only the sustained political will of the international community as a whole can make durable peace and sustainable development a reality in Africa. Effective implementation of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report is indispensable for the realization of that goal.

Indeed, development in Africa is hindered by many factors, including conflict in some parts of the continent. Addressing the causes of conflict in Africa will enable us to tackle the roots of unnecessary bloodshed and the waste of human resources in our continent. In doing so, it is important to take into account both internal and external factors of conflicts in Africa. We would also like to stress the role of the United Nations in rendering assistance for post-conflict peace-building and reconstruction.

Furthermore, the need to strengthen the capacities of African countries to participate in all aspects of peacekeeping operations cannot be overemphasized. Recent experience in Sierra Leone should enable the United Nations to draw clear and unambiguous lessons on how the lack of resources can result in delayed peace and delayed development. The United Nations had the capacity to stop the horrors which occurred in Sierra Leone. All that was needed was the will to act and to act

in time. We must therefore ensure that timely action is taken by the United Nations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo so as to bring peace and development to that country. Thus, increased cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and subregional organizations should be increased. In this context, we in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) are grateful for the assistance in support of the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We call for continued assistance by the international community for the full implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Regional cooperation and integration are an important part of the process for Africa's recovery. Hence, the process for the establishment of the African Economic Community will benefit from enhanced regional cooperation. Various United Nations agencies are providing assistance in this regard, and we concur with the Secretary-General's recommendation for the need to examine ways and means to deepen support for regional integration.

The Secretary-General's report highlights the declining growth of many African economies. This is caused in part by lower commodity prices. Therefore, the international community should assist African countries to improve access for their commodities to markets. Adequate flows of official development assistance in line with agreed targets, as well as increased foreign direct investment, are indispensable to Africa's economic recovery. In addition, it is important for the efforts of African countries to be complemented through capacity-building and technical assistance so as to sustain the pace of economic growth and development.

In this respect, however, we draw attention to the concern indicated in the Secretary-General's report and to the need to redesign technical assistance so as to narrow and close the gap between African countries and industrial countries by accelerating the transfer of knowledge, skills and expertise.

Cognizant of the link between peace, democracy and development, Namibia has requested relevant United Nations agencies for assistance in strengthening institutions for public administration and has indeed benefited from that assistance in strengthening our governing institutions. No one can deny that the creation of institutions and regulations for the promotion of democracy, good governance, transparency and the rule of law is essential for sustainable development everywhere. The point we are making is that international economic and financial institutions should respond effectively to the reforms African countries are undertaking.

Let me now touch briefly on other developmental issues. Today, millions of our people continue to live in poverty. Some 44 per cent of Africa's population live below the poverty line, with a per capita monthly income of $39. Poverty in Africa is exacerbated by the debt burden, civil strife and lack of resources to implement projects to eradicate poverty.

Furthermore, the gravest threat in Africa to sustainable development is the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The rapid, disproportional spread of the disease to women in Africa and the large number of AIDS orphans have serious implications for our future.

In your acceptance speech, in September, Mr. President, you had this to say:

> "our children continue to die of diseases long ago eradicated in the developed world." (A/54/PV.1, p. 6)

As if that were not enough to cope with, our children are today the prey of HIV/AIDS. A few days ago, here at the United Nations, we commemorated World AIDS Day. Who can ever forget the face of that orphaned young African boy who did not need to say a word about his pain, for his face said it all. There are many such faces today in Africa and unless concerted international action is taken we are headed for disaster. It was therefore no coincidence that during the Sixth Regional Conference on Women and Development, held in Addis Ababa, the spread of HIV/AIDS, and how to combat this pandemic, was highlighted. Given the disastrous economic and social impact of AIDS, it is crucial that this pandemic be urgently and effectively addressed.

Furthermore, the Sixth Regional Conference mapped out priorities and strategies for the next five years to accelerate the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action, including the need to have national gender policies and well- designed monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to monitor progress achieved.

Indeed, various initiatives on Africa exist, including the Cairo Agenda for Action, the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa and the Tokyo

International Conference on African Development. What is needed, therefore, is coordination and harmonization.

Last year, at its fifty-third session, the General Assembly decided to establish an open-ended ad hoc working group on Africa. It is our hope that working group will make use of the progress report of the Secretary-General, as well as the agreed conclusions of the Economic and Social Council adopted during the 1999 substantive session.

The causes of conflict in Africa are clearly spelled out in the report, as are the actions needed to promote peace and sustainable development. What remains is for there to be political will on the part the international community to implement the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report for the benefit of Africans and humankind as a whole.

**Ms. Coelho Da Cruz** (Angola): A year ago, the General Assembly discussed the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflicts and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871). Although some encouraging developments have taken place as a result of collective efforts made towards the peaceful resolution of conflicts, many conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the differences between Ethiopia and Eritrea and the current situations in Burundi, Somalia and in my own country — continue to be a source of concern to Africa.

I would like to take this opportunity to stress how important it is for the international community and the United Nations, in particular the Security Council, to take immediate action in supporting the peace accords sponsored by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and, in cooperation with the OAU, by regional economic communities — namely, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

Regional and subregional organizations have an important role to play in preventive diplomacy, confidence-building, armaments control and the peaceful settlement of disputes. With regard to preventive diplomacy, it is crucial to improve the existing diplomatic mechanisms and other institutional frameworks to prevent, handle and find a peaceful solution to these conflicts. It is also important to strengthen those institutions capable of carrying out the peace efforts in order to generate a combination of instruments to prevent and monitor conflicts, on the one hand, and to manage those international peace instruments with special relevance to the regional context, on the other hand.

With regard to confidence-building — and notwithstanding the goals already achieved — the realities and scenarios of the regional conflicts are not substantially different with the end of the cold war, taking into account the fact that the common terms of strategic unity in Africa have disintegrated as a result of the end of global military bipolarity and the re-emerging geostrategic interests.

With regard to armaments control and restrictions, and taking into account that war regulations are an integral and crucial part of national defence, along with various other sovereign instruments, regional warfare and armaments restrictions are a necessity for African States for the following reasons: first, because there is no economy that can resist an unlimited expansion in military spending; secondly, because technological advancement is a functional imperative for defence; and thirdly, because regional military balances are dynamic, as each country has a natural limit on the development of its military capabilities, which, in turn, depends on those of other countries.

We support the holding of an international conference on small arms and light weapons in the year 2001. It is imperative that we take action to control and decrease the manufacture, transfer and stockpiling of small arms and light weapons, which are accountable for most of the casualties in the current conflicts. The non-controlled proliferation of this type of weapon helps create a climate of mistrust and suspicion and ultimately generates warfare, especially among the poorest countries in the world.

The clearance of anti-personnel landmines also needs the involvement and the support of the international community. The Angolan Government will give its commitment to the efforts at the national, regional and international levels to end this scourge.

As many delegations have stated, economic and social problems are among the root causes of conflicts. Nevertheless, we should not overlook the fact that the lack of political will on the part of the international community in most such situations perpetuates those crises. In the case of Angola, the Peace Accords concluded in Portugal in 1991, which led Angola to hold its first multi-party elections, under United Nations

verification, were simply thrown away by the party that lost the elections. It was subsequently proved that the losing party had no intention whatsoever to accept the ballot results even if they had been favourable to that party, since its aim was not reconciliation but revenge; and a new war of catastrophic proportions, after 18 months of ceasefire, was awaiting the Angolan people.

Thanks to the mediation of the United Nations and the patience and good will of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the late Maître Alioune Blondin Beye, to whom we pay moving tribute, it was possible, after a year of intensive negotiations in Lusaka, to achieve a new peace agreement, known as the Lusaka Protocol, which, as was immediately shown by the absence of its leader at the signing of the agreement, UNITA had no intention of fulfilling.

Under the new peace agreement, the United Nations was engaged in a costly and very complex peacekeeping operation in Angola, after obtaining assurances of political will from both parties to the peace agreement, the Government of Angola and UNITA. But, as a corollary to the lack of political will and the lack of desire for peace, UNITA deceived everyone, in particular the United Nations, whose mission was to achieve the cantonment, disarmament and demobilization of the UNITA army.

In an act of political fraud of heretofore unknown proportions, instead of demobilizing, UNITA mobilized new troops. Instead of disarming, UNITA reinforced its military capacity with highly sophisticated weapons. Instead of transferring to the State the areas under its control, UNITA occupied selected new areas in the diamond belt with a view to supporting the war efforts planned by Savimbi. And last but not least, UNITA has since then made efforts to spread the conflict to Angola's neighbouring countries, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of the Congo and Namibia.

Since 1992 the Security Council has been adopting resolutions strongly condemning Savimbi and UNITA and has undertaken efforts to reinforce the sanctions imposed on UNITA. We support the efforts of the sanctions Committee established under resolution 864 (1993) and we appeal to the Governments of Member States and to international organizations and non-governmental organizations to cooperate with the Committee and with the groups of experts in charge of the fiscalization of the implementation of the sanctions.

Nevertheless, the Angolan Government considers that the international community can and should do more in order to make Savimbi assume the consequences for this warlike and criminal behaviour, which is the cause of indescribable suffering for the Angolan people. Moreover, Savimbi bears responsibility for the killing of personnel of peacekeeping operations and humanitarian agencies, the shooting down of a United Nations aircraft, the shameful fooling of the international community and the murder of Angolans by the hundreds of thousands. For that reason, the OAU, the SADC and the Movement of the Non-Aligned Countries consider Savimbi to be a war criminal.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the peace accords signed in July 1999 may be derailed because of the lack of an immediate response on the part of the international community. The warring factions are taking advantage of this situation to systematically violate the ceasefire agreement.

With the adoption of Security Council resolution 1279 (1999), the conditions have been created to start preparations for the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping mission, which we hope will take place soon.

African countries are more than ever aware of their responsibilities, even while recognizing that the majority of their problems arise from legacies and injustices left over from colonial rule.

Refugees and displaced persons, whose situation is a direct consequence of an internal conflict, have generally become a considerable burden to neighbouring countries. To minimize the impact of such a situation on the host countries, international support and solidarity are of essential importance. We therefore vigorously urge all Governments, United Nations agencies and international humanitarian organizations to pledge their support.

Before I conclude, allow me to express Angola's concern at the continued decline in official development assistance. That decline and the minimal foreign direct investment in the continent are likely to prolong Africa's underdevelopment. Concerning the external debt, there is a need, as the Secretary- General pointed out, for the donor countries to review their policies and intensify their efforts towards more effective and efficient debt relief measures.

**Mr. Menkerios** (Eritrea): My delegation reiterates its highest appreciation of the Secretary-General's concern for and initiative on Africa, and commends his succinct report on the measures taken and results achieved concerning good governance and social and economic development in Africa. We further support, in essence, the recommendations for further action presented in the report under discussion.

The United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa, adopted by the General Assembly in 1991, set appropriate priority areas for Africa's economic recovery and development. Africa's development partners also committed themselves to support Africa in all its efforts for economic development and the establishment of peace and stability, which are essential for sustained development. The Secretary-General's report adequately describes the record of this cooperation hitherto and presents recommendations for more action in the future if such cooperation is to make a significant difference.

Eritrea is in agreement with the content and recommendations of this report. My country would only emphasize that Africa, despite the many obstacles inherited and internally exacerbated, is making an effort to solve its problems, and cooperation with it in its endeavours must be recognized and pursued not as charity, but in the interest of the collective good.

Basically because of the vigorous measures taken by many African countries for economic, political and social reform and regional cooperation, positive achievements have been made in economic growth, especially during the first half of the 1990s and through the middle of the decade. Collectively too, African countries adopted, at the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Summit level, the Cairo Agenda for Action to relaunch Africa's economic and social development along the same lines as the United Nations Agenda. They have also established the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution to work for peace and stability, which are essential for sustained development. Indeed, through this Mechanism, and its regional organizations, Africa has made efforts and successful beginnings for the peaceful settlement of conflicts. If these have not been fully successful, it is not because of lack of concern or initiative, but because of lack of adequate capacity. It is the enhancement of this capacity, both in working for peace and stability and in ensuring sustained economic development, that Africa requires genuine partnership from its development partners, including United Nations agencies.

Peace and stability are necessary prerequisites for economic and social development, and recent developments in Africa have fully demonstrated this fact. Despite the efforts and achievements of the OAU and African regional organizations, conflicts in Africa have increased during the second half of the 1990s. It is thus not surprising that not only has human suffering in all its aspects increased, but the rate of economic development also has declined during that period. Although other external factors have contributed to this decline, it is essentially the eruption and extension of conflicts that has crippled Africa's internal capacity to concentrate on issues of development. As stated yesterday by Secretary-General Kofi Annan in his address to the Assembly on the present agenda item, the lack of political will on the part of some of the protagonists to resolve conflicts through peaceful means has led to an expanding cycle of instability that is engulfing wider areas of the continent.

In the case of the conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia, the OAU — with the support of the United Nations, regional organizations such as the European Union, and concerned countries, particularly the United States — has laboriously worked to resolve the border conflict peacefully for the past 19 months. In the process, the OAU has prepared and presented a set of proposals, namely, the Framework Agreement; the modalities of implementation; and the technical arrangements for the implementation of the Framework Agreement and its modalities.

My country, Eritrea, has fully accepted this package of proposals, making the necessary compromises in the interest of peace. It has done so officially and unequivocally, and it has been and is ready for their implementation. It is unfortunate that I have to report to the Assembly, however, that the Ethiopian Government has just reiterated categorically its rejection of the OAU package of peace proposals. It did so after having held the implementation of the peace package hostage by setting ever new conditions and after having presented questions for clarification and received detailed answers from the OAU.

Ethiopia's Prime Minister declared in a public statement on 7 December 1999 that his Government rejected the package, and he issued a call to his countrymen to be ready for war. The official statement issued on 8 December 1999 by the Ethiopian Government spokesperson, after reiterating Ethiopia's rejection of the peace package as unacceptable, taunted the entire international community by stating:

> "Recognizing Ethiopia's position, the international community should cease its futile attempt to pressurize the Ethiopian Government to sign the existing technical arrangements."

To accentuate the firmness of the Ethiopian regime's rejection of the OAU peace package, the statement concludes with a definitive position:

> "The current path pursued by international mediators is not the path to a peaceful resolution of the conflict."

In the face of Ethiopia's rejection of the OAU peace package and of its threats to resort to force, Eritrea and its people will have no option but to stand firm to defend their sovereignty and dignity. But what do we expect from the international community, the international institutions that are entrusted with promoting and defending international peace and security? The Security Council has supported and endorsed the OAU peace proposals as fair and balanced. It has consistently declared its strong support for the continued efforts of the OAU and the supportive efforts of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy and of concerned countries.

Only two days ago, when discussing the agenda item on cooperation between OAU and the United Nations, the Permanent Representative of Finland, speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU), also voiced wider international support when she reiterated that the EU "strongly support[s] the OAU package of peace agreements" (A/54/PV.72), and urged its implementation. Ethiopia's rejection of the OAU peace package is a rejection of — and, therefore, an affront to — the collective stand and will of the entire international community. If such a rejection, and such persistence in continuing on the path of war and aggression as is being shown by the Ethiopian Government, is not challenged by concrete and concerted international action, the international community will not only fail Africa in its efforts for peace and development but also risk undermining the credibility and capacity of the very instruments it has established for its collective peace and security.

This is a test case, not only for the peoples of Eritrea and Ethiopia, our immediate region and Africa as a whole, who count on the United Nations to stand firmly on the side of peace against those who stand for war, but also for the very principles and institutions of the United Nations itself.

We believe that the United Nations must not fail take firm action against Ethiopia, which has decided challenge the efforts of, and the stand taken by, the OA and the entire international community for the peacef settlement of the conflict, thus jeopardizing the peace a stability of our entire region, Africa and the world.

**Mr. Semakula Kiwanuka** (Uganda): I privileged once again to take the floor to address t representatives here assembled on a subject of su immense importance to Africa in particular, and t international community in general. I am referring to t question of peace, security and development. Eighte months have passed since, in April 1998, the Secretar General issued his report on the causes of conflict and t promotion of durable peace and sustainable developme in Africa (A/52/871). The report was a landma document, and it will remain a point of reference f years to come. Today we are conducting a review. Wh is the state of the balance sheet?

On the eve of the new millennium, Africa is st faced with the interlinked challenges of peac democracy, human rights, good governance a sustainable economic development. Let me begin on t positive and bright side. Today there is a new generati of political, institutional and economic reforms design to accelerate economic growth, promote democra governance and sustain efforts to wage war on pover I am pleased to report that yesterday in Nairobi, und the guidance of President arap Moi of Kenya and w the good offices of the Carter Center, President Museve of Uganda and President Al-Bashir of Sudan signed agreement by which the two leaders committ themselves to normalizing relations between the t countries.

In July this year, the Lusaka Agreement for peac under the guidance of President Chiluba of Zambia, w signed by all the belligerent parties in the Democra Republic of the Congo. Peace is returning to war-to Sierra Leone. Warring factions and parties have be reconciled in Guinea-Bissau. When I wrote this statem yesterday, I wrote that we were looking forward to t day when Ethiopia and Eritrea would accept t Organization of African Unity (OAU) peace process. B sadly, we have just been informed that one of the part has rejected the OAU efforts.

On the democratic front, too, Africa, which w ruled by authoritarian regimes, both civilian and milita is experiencing change. The 1990s have witnessed a sh

away from authoritarianism and the ushering in of democratic reforms. In spite of all the tragedies that are besetting the continent, the region is moving forward, and some have even spoken of an African renaissance, notwithstanding the faltering nature of its steps. Uganda welcomes the positive developments in Nigeria which have restored civilian rule through democratic elections. In Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia and elsewhere, citizens are now electing their Governments. The challenge for Africa is that we must sustain an agenda for democracy and good governance. To achieve this objective, Africa needs to strive to produce leaders with vision, leaders who are pragmatic and committed to peace and to the economic transformation of the continent.

On the economic front, the 1980s were described as the "lost decade". But who can say the same at the end of the 1990s? After those lost opportunities, Africa's economic performance has improved and the outlook has brightened. Real gross domestic product for the region as a whole is growing by 4 to 5 per cent per year. Incomes are on the rise, although not as fast as we would wish. African countries are experiencing economic recovery. In the early 1990s, fewer than 20 countries enjoyed growth rates of 3 per cent. But by 1997, many countries — 40 of them — had doubled their growth rates. Inflation is also on the decline. Fiscal deficits have been cut in the past five years. All of these developments constitute a remarkable reversal of the constant drift towards poverty and represent a trend towards continuing positive growth.

Speaking at the OAU summit in Harare in 1997, the outgoing Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, Mr. Michel Camdessus, rightly cautioned that these improvements do not warrant euphoria. Nevertheless, they are encouraging as we look to the future. They give us optimism because they are not the result of accidents or luck, but of improved economic and financial reforms undertaken by African Governments. The results may not be uniform, but the trend is clear.

In spite of the positive trends which we have outlined, Africa still faces serious challenges. We know too well that the signing of a peace agreement does not necessarily bring peace; it is simply the beginning of a process. The way forward cannot be travelled, however, by Africa alone; Africa needs the commitment of the international community to its future, particularly the commitment of the Security Council. We also know that the mere holding of elections is no panacea that will bring democracy and good governance. Human rights and the rule of law have to be respected and safeguarded.

Experience has shown that conflicts can be predicted and prevented, not only through early warning but also through early prevention measures. Preventing conflicts is a difficult and long-term process, but it offers better prospects: it is cheaper, not only in preventing the loss of human lives but also in terms of the destruction of infrastructure. It prevents human tragedies like that of Rwanda; it limits the number of refugees and internally displaced persons — of whom Africa has the largest number. To prevent conflicts, the United Nations, and especially the Security Council, must give conflict prevention a higher priority on its agenda. That means devoting more resources and mustering the political will to respond to the early warning signs and to provide a rapid response.

It is sad, however, that as of now there appears to be an unacceptable absence of rapid response to African conflicts. Where thousands of lives could have been saved, thousands are lost due to what we might call foot-dragging — and what else can we call it? Let us take just one example: the Lusaka peace process. The Lusaka Agreement was signed in July 1999, but thus far the response from the Security Council has been very disappointing. In the face of a serious threat that the peace process could fall apart, what do we see? We see repeated visits by survey teams. Survey teams do not protect the peace.

Nevertheless, my delegation welcomes the very robust approach taken by Ambassador Holbrooke of the United States, who is currently visiting Africa. But what is important is to translate the bold words into actions that will safeguard and further what are still fragile peace processes, not only in the Democratic Republic of the Congo but also in Sierra Leone. That would help focus Africa's energies on peace and economic development.

Let me now turn to the subject of the proliferation of and illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. My delegation commends the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the Security Council for the attention that is being paid to the menace of small-arms proliferation. In September this year, at its 4048th meeting, the Security Council addressed that very subject. In the same vein, my delegation commends the Governments of Canada and of Australia for the lead role they have played in this area.

Let me just briefly outline the menace of small arms and light weapons. Largely as a result of the illicit trade in small arms, Africa remains at war with itself. Of the

25 major conflicts in the world today, 24 are in Africa, and they are fueled by small arms. Besides the loss of human life, another direct consequence of the dozens of conflicts currently under way in Africa is that scarce resources have been diverted from more pressing socio-economic development needs to military expenditure. Although defence budgets may be on the decline in many places, Africa has been estimated to be spending nearly $800 billion on military expenditures, according to the authoritative Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

A number of African countries at war spend as much as 50 per cent of their budgets on war equipment. In the words of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan,

> "Small arms cause big tragedies. Readily available and easy to use, they have been the primary or sole tools of violence in almost every recent conflict dealt with by the United Nations. In the hands of irregular troops operating with scant respect for international and humanitarian law, small arms and light weapons have taken a heavy toll of human lives, with women and children accounting for a high proportion of the casualties. They have driven people from their homes, undermined development, led to increases in crime and social violence and thwarted the prospect for investments". (*Press Release SG/SM/7078*)

Let me turn to the positive side of the small-arms question. It is gratifying that African Governments too have begun to address this scourge. In August this year, representatives from nearly all African countries gathered in the capital of Togo, Lomé, for an international workshop on illicit trafficking in small arms. At the thirty-fifth summit of the Organization of African Unity, held in Algiers in July this year, African heads of State or Government recommended the convening of a regional conference in 2000 to address this problem. The conference would recommend steps to solve problems related to the use and transfer of these arms.

In July this year the Government of Liberia began a process of destroying all weapons that had been decommissioned from the civil war. President Taylor of Liberia and the people of Liberia merit the world's recognition for their wise decision.

These and many other positive developments are major steps towards the consolidation of peace. We would like to see more of them in the rest of the continent.

For Africa to consolidate peace, it needs partnerships. We need partnerships not only to overcome the problems of conflict, but also to develop the capacity to eradicate poverty and the capacity to embark upon economic growth and to support open markets. We need partners to build our institutions. My delegation commends the Group of Seven and other partners for their contribution to the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative. But debt is still a crushing burden for many countries. We welcome discussions on the total write-off of Africa's debt.

Let me go back to the military crisis and emphasize that without rapid response to conflicts and in conflict prevention and conflict resolution, without rapid response in the consolidation of peace, conflicts that have undermined African efforts towards economic growth and development will continue. And I emphasize too that Africa needs such responses from the United Nations and from the international community at large. These responses are essential benchmarks in the building of durable peace. We emphasize our call to the United Nations and the Security Council to respond more rapidly to the crisis in Africa.

Finally, allow me to thank all those delegations that have participated in this debate. Their participation and their presence are a demonstration of their concern and an expression of solidarity with Africa and its endeavours to overcome conflicts and to address problems of sustainable development.

**Mr. Apata** (Nigeria): My delegation appreciates this opportunity to contribute to the discussion of agenda item 46, "Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa". Peace is at the centre of development. Conflicts not only wreak havoc on the physical infrastructure of States engulfed in conflict but also create social turmoil. It is for this reason that development cannot take place in situations of crisis and conflict. This informs our role in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). Restoring peace to Liberia was an objective for which Nigeria deployed huge material and human resources. Our desire to rid our subregion of conflict has further compelled us to be involved in Sierra Leone. It is gratifying that the United Nations has now joined forces with ECOWAS in the peacekeeping and peacemaking efforts in Sierra Leone.

Our efforts are not limited to the West African subregion. Since our independence, we have played a

major role in facilitating the peaceful resolution of conflicts in various parts of our continent. That is why we are pleased that today many States in southern Africa which were previously in conflict situations are now playing prominent roles in peacemaking efforts in that part of our continent. Only recently, an important initiative was taken by seven heads of State or Government, at the urging of President Olusegun Obasanjo, to hold a meeting of the Gulf of Guinea Joint Commission in Libreville, Gabon. The principal goal of the Commission is to promote peace and stability through development. This initiative clearly underscores the determination of the Gulf of Guinea leaders to promote development as a conflict-prevention mechanism.

It is against this background that my delegation welcomes the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council in document A/54/133-E/1999/79. The wide range of measures highlighted in the report, if successfully implemented, will contribute to turning a continent that has become synonymous with conflict to a continent of peace. We agree with the Secretary-General that measures such as strengthening good governance, social development, improving trade flows and support for regional cooperation and integration will contribute to the rapid transformation of Africa in the socio-economic domain while reinforcing peace and stability. There is a plethora of organizations, including the United Nations system, involved in peace-building in States emerging from conflict in Africa. We welcome these efforts. However, the impression is often given that the members of the donor community, including non-governmental organizations, are competing among themselves. As a result, there is duplication of efforts, programmes and projects. An example is the area of governance, in which the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank and several bilateral donor agencies duplicate each other's efforts. It is of crucial importance, therefore, for a mechanism to be put in place to remove this overlapping and duplication, especially given the background of dwindling financial resources.

The need to address more constructively and productively some of the major problems facing African countries, highlighted by the Secretary-General in September last year during his meeting with representatives of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee, remains urgent. Implementation thus far on the issues of external debt burden, official development assistance, market access and foreign direct investment has, according to the current report, not removed Africa's need for access to the markets of industrialized countries. While my delegation commends those countries which have met, and indeed exceeded, the 0.7 per cent official development assistance target, it is sad to observe that several developed countries have continued to renege on this. Surely, if there is political will, developed countries will have no difficulty in meeting this target.

African leaders accept that the primary responsibility for promoting the economic development of their societies is theirs. In this regard, it is important to recall that African leaders, on their own, launched the initiative called the Cairo Agenda for Action for relaunching Africa's economic and social development as the response for moving Africa out of poverty and transforming their economies to a level at which we can become equal partners in the global economic system. To this end, African leaders are redoubling their efforts and working assiduously towards the early realization of the African Economic Community. The economic integration of the continent is one sure way of preventing conflict and promoting social and economic development. Positive results are already being recorded at the subregional level, particularly among Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries.

In conclusion, the promotion of peace on the continent must be packaged to achieve the following minimum political and socio- economic objectives. It must look far beyond current conflict situations and incorporate substantial rehabilitative entrepreneurial schemes, which will promote genuine reconciliation between people and prevent relapse into conflict. It must restore collapsed infrastructure, particularly in educational and health infrastructures, as well as in telecommunications, energy, and transport. It must free African countries of their crippling debt burden to enable them to finance development projects. It must enhance the competitiveness of African products and advance cooperation and the integration of the African economies into a mutually beneficial global economy. Finally, it must rapidly assist African States to show their peoples the value and importance of peace in terms of the tangible benefits — peace dividends — which the ordinary people can identify with.

**The President**: In accordance with the decision taken at the 74th plenary meeting of the General Assembly, yesterday, I now call on the observer of the Holy See.

**Monsignor Panikulam** (Holy See): In addressing the annual Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), in Algiers on 12 July 1999, the Secretary-General made a new analysis of the African situation. He criticized the persistence of deadly conflicts and the dangerous flow of arms. He praised the progress made by some countries and urged good governance and concerted action.

In 1995 Pope John Paul II, who sees himself as a friend of Africa, stated,

> "Africa bears the scars of its long history of humiliations. This continent has too frequently been considered only for selfish interests. Today Africa is asking to be loved and respected for what it is. It does not ask for compassion, it asks for solidarity."

But in his address of 11 January 1998 to the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See, the Pope stated,

> "If violent attainment of power becomes the norm, if insistence on ethnic considerations continues to override all other concerns, if democratic representation is systematically put aside, if corruption and arms trade continue to rage, then Africa will never experience peace or development, and future generations will mercilessly judge these pages of African history."

On 24 April 1998, Archbishop Jean-Louis Tauran, the Holy See's Secretary for Relations with States, addressing the Security Council, put forward five priorities of the Holy See with regard to Africa: respect for life and ethnic diversity, poverty eradication, ending the arms flow, the resolution of conflicts and action, motivated by solidarity, to achieve development. Those priorities remain the same today, perhaps with renewed urgency.

The Holy See delegation would like at present to focus on two main points in particular: the deadly conflicts and the inadequate development in Africa.

Since 1970, more than 30 wars have been fought in Africa. Almost all of the 53 countries of Africa are afflicted by armed conflicts. Each conflict has caused more than a million deaths and created the same number of refugees and almost the same number of displaced persons. More than 20 million children either have fallen as victims of conflicts or have become homeless, disabled or orphans. Tens of thousands are constrained to take up arms and fight as soldiers. There are conflicts that have lasted for more than a quarter of a century, and in Africa the world has witnessed for years unthinkable atrocities such as genocide and maiming. Violence begets hatred, and hatred results in continued atrocities. This has been an ongoing process for years and decades, threatening the security of the entire continent and causing the international community to be increasingly uninterested in Africa, so much so that the conflicts in Africa have become forgotten wars. In addition, often the initiatives undertaken by the international community are rejected by the parties to the conflicts, thus rendering the international community's concerted efforts ineffective. Or else, powers, far and near, connive to condemn such international actions to failure.

That is only one side of the picture. The other side is the vexing poverty that has become chronic in some parts of the continent. According to the recent Food and Agriculture Organization report, nearly 10 million people in sub-Saharan Africa need emergency food assistance. And, as noted by the Secretary-General, 44 per cent of Africans as a whole and 51 per cent of those in sub-Saharan Africa live in absolute poverty. Even the level of official development assistance to Africa is falling.

Africa, which suffers from deteriorating poverty, abounds in weapons, be they purchased on the grey or black market. West Africa alone is estimated to possess more than 8 million small arms. Leaders of areas rich in diamonds sell them to acquire more sophisticated weapons. Poorer countries, on the other hand, even mortgage crops to acquire small arms. Despite the recommendations of the Secretary-General that African States should reduce their expenditure on weapons and ammunition to 1.5 per cent of gross national product, and should have zero growth in their defence budgets for 10 years, things are still moving in the opposite direction in too many States.

This is a strange paradox. Impoverished countries acquire large quantities of weapons to kill, and rich countries, from within Africa and from abroad, profit from the thirst for power of a few, dooming millions to utter starvation. Until the constant flow of arms to Africa is curbed effectively, the conflict situations are going to continue causing an even more dangerous turn of events. Those who accumulate weapons at the cost of hunger-ridden millions and those who provide them with such weapons for extra profits are equally guilty in the process. That crime on both sides should not continue.

Resolving conflicts remains the first step towards security and development in Africa. But concerted action and political will both from the African leadership and from the international community are urgently called for to accelerate sustainable development.

Development is the new name for peace. That is all the more true of Africa today, vexed by conflicts and ravaged by poverty. Instead of cursing the past and repeating the question "What can the world do for Africa?", it is time for Africans to look to the present and future and ask "What can Africans themselves do for Africa?".

The international community, for its part, must ensure that Africa envisages its own economic development. Cancellation of foreign debts, opening of markets without setting burdensome conditions, preferential economic assistance and adequate transfer of technology and human resources are the urgently needed steps. But all such international initiatives will have to respect the situation special to Africa and the requirements of its different regions and populations.

Peace is the fruit of solidarity and this is the time to reaffirm solidarity for Africa. Isolation and marginalization, of which Africa has been a victim in the past, should end and the international community should then lend it a strong helping hand to take the next and most deliberate step forward into peace and prosperity.

**The President**: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

I remind members that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

**Mr. Nega** (Ethiopia): The representative of Eritrea, in his statement under the agenda item on causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, referred to the crisis between Ethiopia and Eritrea and, in the usual style of doublespeak and distortion, attempted to mislead and confuse this Assembly on a number of points.

I wish at the outset to draw the attention of this Assembly in general, and in particular of those who may be prey to the misinformation campaign we just heard, to the fact that Ethiopia, from the very onset of this crisis, has shown commitment to and respect for the efforts of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) by accepting its peace proposals and continues to be engaged with that continental organization's ongoing efforts. It is indeed an insult to the intelligence of this body that the Eritrean representative had the temerity to accuse Ethiopia of rejecting the OAU peace efforts, while it is a well-known fact that Eritrea has never had faith in the OAU or its efforts right from the onset of this crisis.

The representative of Eritrea, in his statement, did not mention the cause of the crisis between the two countries, although the very agenda item under which he spoke deals with the causes of conflict in Africa. The crisis between Ethiopia and Eritrea is caused by Eritrea's blatant armed aggression against Ethiopia and its forcible occupation of our territory in May 1998. This has been established by the OAU and by other third parties involved in the peace efforts and confirmed in their proposals and recommendations requesting Eritrea to withdraw from occupied Ethiopian territories.

The Eritrean authorities must be judged not by what they say, but by what they have done and are doing and by what they are prepared to do. So far, what they have said and what they have done and are doing make us and others who know them first-hand sceptical about their sincerity, especially when they pose as disciples of peace. Experience has shown in the past 19 months — at least in connection with the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict — that what the Eritrean authorities have said and continue to say has never matched what they have done and what they are doing.

Soon after they launched an armed aggression against Ethiopia, the Eritrean authorities denied the fact that they had committed an act of aggression against Ethiopia and presented themselves as victims of aggression and as peace-loving. But in reality, they were the ones who committed aggression and obstructed all peace proposals, including the OAU Framework Agreement, which they now purport to champion.

It is to be recalled that Eritrea's refusal to accept and implement the OAU Framework Agreement and its continued acts of provocation led to major conflict between the two countries in February 1999, in which Ethiopia was able to liberate Badme, one of the territories forcibly occupied by Eritrea. Within 24 hours of its occupation forces being routed from Badme, Eritrea notified the Security Council of its acceptance of the OAU Framework Agreement and suddenly became a new

convert in embracing the OAU proposal. But again, in reality, Eritrea's conversion was not sincere, as one can conclude both from the letter of the President of the country dated 27 February 1999 addressed to the President of the Security Council, and from subsequent actions of Eritrea on the ground. Clearly, Eritrea's belated and insincere acceptance of the OAU Framework Agreement was a public-relations gimmick and a time-buying tactic for regrouping its defeated army to launch military offensives, as it subsequently did in March, June, September and late October 1999. Now, the Eritrean authorities are again preaching peace and pose as disciples of peace, as we heard in the statement of the Eritrean representative a while ago.

But one should again ask the question: What are the Eritrean authorities doing now? Are they making preparations to withdraw their troops from the Ethiopian territories, as the OAU Framework Agreement requires them to do? Or are they busy digging trenches and sending more and more troops and equipment to these territories? The Eritrean authorities are busy doing the latter.

It is with this record that the Eritrean authorities present themselves as champions of peace and shamelessly accuse Ethiopia of obstruction. As to Ethiopia, our only objective and demand remain the full restoration of the country's sovereignty over all its territories forcibly occupied by Eritrea since May 1998. Nothing more, nothing less.

The quotations made by the Eritrean representative from our Prime Minister's interview with the local media are highly selective and grossly distorted, again designed to mislead this Assembly and international public opinion at large. The position stated by our Prime Minister regarding Ethiopia's demand for the withdrawal of the invading Eritrean army and for the full restoration of the status quo ante that existed before the Eritrean invasion has been Ethiopia's long-standing and consistent position. It can by no means be labelled, as the representative of Eritrea labelled it, a rejection of the OAU Framework Agreement and the modalities for the implementation of the Framework Agreement.

The OAU Framework Agreement and the modalities for its implementation, adopted by the African heads of State or Government, require Eritrea to withdraw from all Ethiopian territories. Ethiopia has accepted these two documents fully and without conditions and wishes to see the faithful and unadulterated implementation of these two OAU documents.

Any attempt to amend or dilute — as Eritrea has consistently sought to do — the key provisions of the two OAU documents relating to Eritrean withdrawal and the full restoration of the status quo ante that existed before May 1998 would be tantamount to rewarding aggression and therefore cannot be acceptable to Ethiopia.

It is in this spirit that Ethiopia sought clarification on the document known as the technical arrangement and believes that in order for this document to be acceptable it must be brought in line with the two basic documents endorsed by the OAU at the level of the heads of State or Government and fully accepted by Ethiopia.

**The President**: As a fellow African, I must tell Ethiopia and Eritrea that I am ashamed and disappointed.

Many of our friends from outside Africa have once again taken the opportunity of this meeting and of this debate to reiterate their solidarity with and support for Africa. They have pledged to continue assisting Africa in its efforts to achieve the noble goal of peace, so as to allow for development.

We have a lot of work ahead of us. I must appeal for restraint and brevity. We are not really convincing anybody in the General Assembly. We have made this case so many times before, here and in other places. We want to see an end — and soon — to the conflict between two sisterly countries, neighbours: Eritrea and Ethiopia.

**Mr. Menkerios** (Eritrea): I perfectly understand the frustration people must be feeling over the very unfortunate continuation of this conflict, which could and should be resolved by peaceful means.

It is a fact that actually it is the Government of Ethiopia's unilateral and forcible alteration of the borders established between the two countries, at the time of decolonization, that is the root cause of the conflict. Eritrea has demanded, and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Framework Agreement has specified, that an independent investigation be conducted of the developments that led to the eruption of the conflict, so as to establish definitively who is responsible and who is the aggressor.

Ethiopia has expressed its displeasure with this investigation and is demanding that Eritrea be condemned as the aggressor without an investigation. The reason for this must be because Ethiopia knows very well what the results of such an investigation would be. Ethiopia is the

aggressor and bears responsibility for the eruption and escalation of this conflict.

But let us await the results of the investigation instead of asking the international community to take a decision. We are not acting in haste because we are confident of what the outcome of this investigation will be.

The OAU package of proposals contains the following sequence of measures: first, the cessation of hostilities; secondly, the redeployment of the troops of both sides to positions held before the outbreak of hostilities, that is on 6 May; thirdly, the placement of international monitors and peacekeepers in the disputed areas; and fourthly, the demarcation of the border on the basis of established treaties and relevant international law.

This is what Ethiopia is rejecting. Ethiopia is demanding that before demarcation Eritrea and the mediators recognize disputed territories as sovereign Ethiopian territories. Again, why? Is the Ethiopian Government afraid of the outcome of a legal demarcation?

If Ethiopia says that Eritrea has not accepted, we have accepted. Are they ready to sign tomorrow and start the process of implementing those peace proposals? We are.

So instead of beating around the bush, there is a set of proposals that has taken 18 months for the OAU, with the support of the United Nations and concerned countries, to come up with. They are on the table.

Clarifications have been requested. Clarifications have been given. We are now being asked to sign the proposals and implement them.

We are ready. Eritrea stands ready, even here and now, to sign and start the process of implementation. Is Ethiopia?

I think that a short question like that would get us to the answer, rather than elaborate speeches about who is rejecting, who is accepting.

**The President**: I call on the representative of Ethiopia, who wishes to speak a second time in exercise of the right of reply.

**Mr. Nega** (Ethiopia): I regret to be taking the floor once again, but some points should be made very clear. First, as regards the cause of the conflict: it has already been established beyond any doubt by third parties, independent parties, including by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), that Eritrea committed an act of aggression against Ethiopia and that the cause of this crisis is Eritrean aggression.

In its findings and report to the OAU, the OAU ministerial fact-finding committee — which was established, *inter alia*, to collect information regarding the origin of the crisis — rejected the Eritrean assertion which we heard just now and determined that it is

> "of the view that what happened in Badme between 6 and 12 May constitutes a fundamental element of the crisis"

and

> "that Badme and its environs were administered by Ethiopia before 12 May 1998".

Thus, there is no question about who started this problem and who bears responsibility for it.

Secondly, Ethiopia accepted the two basic documents from the very outset, and, again, there is no doubt. Ethiopia is not afraid of demarcation. The two documents clearly stipulate that there will be a demarcation, which we are committed to.

But the two documents make it very clear that before this demarcation takes place the Eritrean troops must withdraw from the Ethiopian territories that they have occupied by force.

It is very clear and understandable that borders cannot be changed by force and international law must be adhered to. This is the basic thrust and essence of the OAU Framework Agreement and the modalities to which Eritrea consistently objected. Eritrea still continues to seek the amendment of these modalities through various means, including through the document just mentioned here, so as to allow it to remain on Ethiopian soil as a reward for its unprovoked aggression.

Ethiopia is ready to sign any agreement, but let Eritrea show its commitment, first and foremost, to withdraw from the Ethiopian territories it occupied by force. This is the key issue.

**The President**: I should like to inform members that a draft resolution on this item will be submitted at a later stage.

*The meeting rose at 1.50 p.m.*